



## GFSDEPSG is Not a Spam Email Title

Posted by **Pierluigi Oliverio** on Monday, July 14, 2008

### City Hall Diary

It is the latest City of San Jose acronym. GFSDEPSG stands for the three-year General Fund Structural Deficit Elimination Plan Stakeholder Group. Whew! Try saying that fast even once.

This group is chaired by my colleague Pietro Constantino (Pete Constant in Italian). The GFSDEPSG includes city workers, unions, various city department directors, nonprofit executives, the Chamber of Commerce and San Jose residents. I have attended all six meetings the GFSDEPSG has had thus far and have enjoyed the arithmetic.

The group is charged with exploring new ideas and talking about touchy topics to solve the structural budget deficit. Sometimes their discussions will include "taboo" topics which are not discussed on the dais since these topics are "political dynamite." However, this group speaks straight from the hip, which is refreshing.

Last Monday, July 7, the group talked about how the city chooses to pay a "living wage" even though it is not required by state law for contract work. "Prevailing wage" is required by state law for construction jobs but not for "charter" cities like San Jose. In 1988, the city voluntarily adopted the state of California prevailing wage law. Then, in 1989, the council increased the scope of the law to include service jobs like street sweeping, parking lot attendants, janitorial, etc., though the state did not require it.

Moving onward and forward, the city adopted a living wage policy in 1999 which included contract work. Living wage is \$12.83 an hour with medical and \$14.08 without medical. It is determined by the Federal poverty threshold for a family of three and then is adjusted each year for inflation. It has never decreased since 1999, even when there is a recession. The city of San Jose has ten fulltime employees to monitor contracts to make sure that contractors are paying their workers the correct city mandated wage.

Some group members spoke about the importance of a living wage and how it may prevent people from being dependent on state and federal welfare programs. Others spoke of its elimination, since it increases the cost to the city and, therefore, residents. The group requested more information in order for this topic to be discussed again at a future meeting.

No one from the public attended the meeting. By contrast, the General Plan 2040 meeting usually generates about 25 spectators. It is also televised. Unfortunately, the GFSDEPSG is not.

If you are looking for an air conditioned room to escape the heat, then consider attending the seventh meeting of GFSDEPSG on Monday, July 21, 6:00 PM, in the wing rooms at City Hall, 200 S. Santa Clara Street.

For more information, go to:

<http://www.sanjoseca.gov/stakeholdergroup08.asp>

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